

BEGONIA CHATTER



<p>Astro Branch American Begonia Society <i>4513 Randwick Drive</i> <i>Houston, Texas 77092-8343</i> <i>(713) 686-8539</i></p>	<p><i>Next Meeting:</i> DATE: April 2018 TIME: PLACE: NO MEETING PROGRAM: THIS MONTH</p>
<p>APRIL 2018 ISSUE</p>	<p>www.begoniahouston.org</p>

NO APRIL MEETING!

The Astro Branch of the American Begonia Society will not be meeting in the month of April. The reasons the decision was made are as follows:

1. April 1st (first Sunday) is April Fools' Day and also Easter Sunday.
2. April 8th (2nd Sunday) members attending the ABS/SWR Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana will be returning to Houston on that day.
3. April 15th (3rd Sunday) is much too close to the May 6th regularly scheduled meeting.

The Astro Branch of The American Begonia Society will hold their next regularly scheduled meeting on May 6, 2018. This meeting will be our Annual Spring Picnic and will be held at the home and Gardens of Tom & Peter. Dress comfortably and bring your favorite lawn chair. The entrée for this event will be Make Your Own Sandwich. Please contact Kathleen Murphy at **281-890-3323** to see what is needed to complete the rest of the menu.

More information about the picnic will follow later.

We look forward to seeing you on May 6th.

Until then enjoy our Spring weather and playing with your plants, while also doing some necessary gardening chores.



Begonia 'Rosea Gigantea' by Alice M. Clark



MINUTES OF THE MARCH 4, 2018 MEETING

The March 4, 2018 meeting of the Astro Branch of the American Begonia Society was held at the West Gray Multi-Service Center located at 1475 West Gray Street in Activity Room 1.

President Janet Carpenter called the meeting to order at 2:15 P.M. She thanked our hostesses who were: **Sue Botts, Donna & Tony Robert** and **Annette Graham**. It was announced that there will be no meeting in April due to Easter Sunday on April 1st and April 8th members will be returning from the American Begonia Society National/Southwest Region Convention held in New Orleans, Louisiana. May 8, 2018 will be our next regularly scheduled meeting. It was announced that this meeting will be our Annual Spring Picnic. This event will be held at the home of Tom and Peter. The entrée will be Make Your Own Sandwich.....luncheon meat will be provided by the Club. If you have not already signed up to provide an item or items needed to complete the menu please contact Kathleen Murphy at kathleemurphy4950@sbcglobal.net or **281-890-3323**.

Janet Carpenter was our Club Photographer for this meeting.

JJ&L Greenhouses, Inc. provided plugs of B. 'Regency', (a rhizomatous begonia) plugs for members to take home and grow. They also provided samples of the different soils they use for growing their beautiful begonias and other plants.

Do not be hasty to discard failing plants-they may recover if they are groomed, the soil refreshed or repotted completely and then very lightly fed.

Tom demonstrated a horizontal method of propagating a begonia stem and leaf-the stem is under the soil.

Cheryl and Tom talked about "Dirt". Cheryl suggests using different types of soil at different stages of development. In a terrarium Cheryl uses orchid sphagnum...keep sealed and moist but not overly wet.

Tom talked about different types of soil available to the average homeowner, gardener and plant enthusiast. Begonias like a ph from neutral to slightly acid. Tom stated he does not like Miracle Gro, because it contains fertilizer. However small the amount of fertilizer, Tom likes to control the fertilizing of his plants. Although Bill Claybaugh and Brenda Andrews like using it without the moisture control added. JJ&L grows in almost pure peat. Tom likes to use Sun-Gro Fafard-52, which is a soilless mix. Tom will experiment with Lady Buy VORTEX premium potting mix. This is also a soilless mix. Also discussed was Soil Mender from Southwest Fertilizer and Pro mix sold by Buchanan's (pure peat-do not use).

Gail Warren uses Ferti-lome Ultimate potting mix and Nature's organic Potting Soil.

The take away was that Potting soil is basic natural dirt with a few additives and Potting mix is a mixture of ingredients with little to no natural dirt added.

The Next Topic was Brenda's damaged plants. Heavily pruned, and debris cleaned up from the soil and then fertilize to regenerate new growth when plant arrives home.

It was now time for the drawings:

Diana Bukey won B. 'Cowardly Lion'

Annette Graham won B. 'Down Home'

Ruby Lewellyn won a painted pot by Faye Stansberry

Tony Robert won a painted pot by Faye Stansberry

Pat Hiscock won B. 'masoniana "Iron Cross"

Gloria Hunter won B. 'Dotsy'

Gail Warren won B. 'Lalomie'

The meeting was adjourned at 4:07 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Robert

(for Secretary Donna Williams)

PRUNING, PLANTING AND TRANSPLANTING

April

2 nd , 3 rd & 4 th	Scorpio
7 th , 8 th & 9 th	Capricorn
12 th & 13 th	Pisces
17 th & 18 th	Taurus
20 th & 21 st	Cancer
30 th	Scorpio

May

1 st	Scorpio
4 th , 5 th & 6 th	Capricorn
9 th , 10 th & 11 th	Pisces
14 th & 15 th	Taurus
18 th & 19 th	Cancer
27 th & 28 th	Scorpio

- Planting and Transplanting are best done in Cancer, Scorpio and Pisces with Cancer being the best.
- Best Pruning for quick growth is first Taurus and then Capricorn.

WEATHER FORECAST FOR APRIL 2018

According to the United States Weather Service, Houston and surrounding area fall in Region 7 of the National Weather Service Map. Here is what they predict our weather will be like for the month of April.

Our temperatures will be slightly below normal and our precipitation will be slightly above normal. Our temperatures should average from 57 degrees in the North to 66 degrees in the South. Our coolest April temperatures will be April 14th thru 8th, 16th thru 19th and 23rd thru 27th. Our warmest April temperatures will be April 2nd & 3rd, 10th thru 14th, 22nd and 30th. There will be scattered showers and thunderstorms most likely about April 3rd thru 6th, 15th thru 17th and 22nd thru 25th. These storms will be local severe and produce heavy rainfall. We can see significant temperature fluctuations during the month.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU!

Birthday wishes go out to our members born in this month of April. We hope your special day is truly a special one.

Tom Anderson	April 28 th
Irene Bragg	April 5 th
Darrin Duling	April 29 th
Lucy Melara	April 2 nd
Glenda Perry	April 10 th
Jeff Stagg	April 25 th
Faye Stansberry	April 23 rd

“Today is a day to enjoy being with friends, to look back on where you’ve been and to look forward to the special times the future holds for you.”

Happy Birthday!

HOW IS YOUR B. ‘JUDY COOK’ GROWING?

At our Annual Christmas Party held on December 3, 2017 members wishing to participate in our Challenge Plant competition chose the plant they wanted to grow. The end of the competition is closing in quickly. The plant we chose to grow are to be brought to the May 6th meeting, which will be our Annual Spring Picnic. As is always the case no matter the condition, all plants are to be returned. It is now Spring with lots of sun and warm temperatures, so B. ‘Judy Cook’ should be enjoying a good growth spurt. We are looking forward to seeing your prize winning plant.



Begonia ‘Bashful Bandit’

by Greg Sytch, New Port Richey, Florida

Begonia ‘Bashful Bandit’ was created in 1996 by crossing two easily grown parents, *B. manicata* x *B. ‘Joe Hayden’*. The idea was to create a dark, easy rhizomatous that was also rather compact but still of good size. After all, I enjoy big begonias that are easy to grow. Initially part of a series, I dwindled them down to three sister seedlings which also include *B. ‘Bodacious Bandit’* (named for fellow Floridian, Virginia Jens) and *B. ‘Kissing Bandit’* (named after the cartoon character). *B. ‘Bashful Bandit’* just came to me one day prior to the other names.

Classified as rhizomatous, medium cleft-leaved, *B. ‘Bashful Bandit’* is a spreading grower to 18” across at maturity and leaves reaching up to 8”, although usually leaves stay around 6 “ wide. They are glossy, dark ochre with purple sheen, red blush underneath. *B. ‘Bashful Bandit’* blooms regularly in late winter and spring with tall spikes that begin as green buds and gradually open to pink flowers, rather profuse. Cold tolerance is excellent, and it adapts to most environments well. It does not like to be overwatered. Propagation is swift from leaf cuttings, and overall growth is easy. *B. ‘Bashful Bandit’* makes an excellent compact houseplant, light plant or moderate landscape plant in mild climates as it does not require a lot of room but can spread if given space. No particular care is required, which makes it an excellent subject for beginners. I have heard from many growers that it thrives almost everywhere it is grown. It does not seem to attract pests or any diseases worth noting. Sometimes, when hybridizing, a seedling appears that is unassuming but holds some special character, so you continue to grow it “just to see what happens.” *B. ‘Bashful Bandit’* is just that seedling, because it has proven popular and vigorous over time.

(This article was taken from the Potomac Branch of the ABS Newsletter March Issue)



(Photograph by Lonnie West at the 2018 Philadelphia Flower Show)

Guest, Diana Bukey
with B. 'Cowardly
Lion'



Annette Graham
with B. 'Down
Home'



Ruby Lewellyn
with decorated pot
donated by Faye
Stansberry



Gloria Hunter
with B. "Dotsy"

Gail Warren
with B. 'Lalomie'



Tony Robert
with decorated pot
donated by Fay
Stansberry.





Begonias and other beautiful plants at Longwood Gardens, March 10, 2018.

